



**Request for City Council Committee Action
From the Department of Public Works**

Date: October 17, 2002
To: Transportation and Public Works Committee
Referral to: none

Subject: Concept Language for a new Bus Lane Ordinance

Recommendation:

1. Direct Public Works staff to revise the Concept Language for a New Bus Ordinance based on the public comment and bring back to T&PW Committee on October 31, 2002 for formal approval.
2. Direct City attorney staff to begin efforts to research and draft the necessary ordinance language and bring back to the T&PW Committee on November 14, 2002 (one meeting cycle after the concept language approval).

Previous Directives:

June 27 T&PW Committee Directions (July 12 City Council Action)

Prepared or Submitted by: Jon Wertjes, Transportation Engineer, 673-2614

Approved: Brian Lokkesmoe, P. E., Interim Director of Public Works

By: Greg Finstad _____
Presenters in Committee: Jon Wertjes

Financial Impact (Check those that apply)

☒ No financial impact - or - Action is within current department budget.
(If checked, go directly to Background/Supporting Information)

☐ Action requires an appropriation increase to the Capital Budget

☐ Action requires an appropriation increase to the Operating Budget

☐ Action provides increased revenue for appropriation increase

☐ Action requires use of contingency or reserves

☐ Other financial impact (Explain):

☐ Request provided to the Budget Office when provided to the Committee
Coordinator

Community Impact (use any categories that apply)
See below

Background:

A one page summary (Exhibit A -- Background for a New Bus Lane Ordinance) outlines the background of the new Bus Lane Ordinance including previous City Council actions and ordinances, issues/problems and goals.

City staff developed and previously presented the draft concept language for a new bus lane ordinance and was directed by staff to gain public input. City accomplished the following:

1. Posted a copy of the concept language on the City web site and sent copies as needed to requestors.
2. Held four (4) public meetings and invited individuals, organizations and businesses that may be affected by a new bus lane ordinance. The four public meetings were held:
 - Wednesday, July 24, 2002
 - Tuesday, August 6, 2002
 - Thursday, August 22, 2002
 - Wednesday, September 11, 2002

Public Feedback and Response:

The public submitted numerous comments and questions via written, verbal and electronic formats. City staff is still compiling the comments and will provide Exhibit B – Public Comments on the New Bus Lane Ordinance at the October 17, 2002 Transportation and Public Works Committee meeting.

Based on the public comments, Public Works staff met with City attorney staff and has begun sorting through the potential concerns. To date city staffs have not completed the efforts needed to revise concept language based on those comments nor create the ordinance language. Numerous issues have resulted in additional time needed to complete their efforts. Such issues include further discussions with enforcement and judicial staffs and accounting for trial dates of city attorney staff. In addition, the downtown business community has requested that implementation of any new bus lane ordinance not be placed on the street until after 3rd Avenue South and LRT construction is substantially completed.

Recommendations:

Therefore, City staff recommends the following:

1. Direct Public Works staff to revise the Concept Language for a New Bus Ordinance based on the public comment and bring back to T&PW Committee on October 31, 2002 for formal approvals.
2. Direct City attorney staff to begin efforts to research and draft the necessary concept language into ordinance language and bring back to the T&PW Committee on November 14, 2002.

Enclosures:

Exhibit A -- Background for a New Bus Lane Ordinance.

Exhibit B -- Public Comments on the New Bus Lane Ordinance (to be handed out at the meeting)

Exhibit A – Background for a New Bus Lane Ordinance.

Current Bus Lane Ordinances and Council Actions:

The current ordinances and Council Actions governing bus lanes are as follows:

- Nicollet Mall – City Ordinance Title 17, Chapter 439
- Hennepin Avenue – Council Action on October 10, 1980
- Marquette/2nd Avenues – Council Action on August 9, 1974
- 4th Street does not have ordinance or Council Action defining its use.
- 6th Street and 3rd Street are not covered by ordinance but are signed for exclusive bus and carpool use. City staff is still researching possible Council Action.

Bus Lane Issues and Problems:

City staff over the past two to three years has received numerous complaints, collected observations, and discussed the problems regarding the bus lanes. City staff held meetings with Metro Transit, taxi industry, Teamsters trucking representative, City Regulatory Services staff, City Attorney staff, and City police staff to understand issues and problems they have encountered. The problems can be summarized as follows:

- Confusion by public and enforcement as to whom is allowed and when they are allowed to use a bus lane.
- Inappropriate and Illegal Use (short-cutting, stopping, parking) by non-authorized vehicles (such as taxis, limos, private, trucks, delivery vehicles, school buses, Public Works and other city vehicles, marked police squads, unmarked police vehicles, etc.)
- Safety — Inappropriate use and unsafe passing of buses by other vehicles resulting in safety issues for pedestrians, bicycles, and vehicular traffic.
- Congestion and Delays to Buses – The inappropriate and illegal bus lane use results in delays and congestion for buses.

Goals of a New Bus Lane Ordinance:

City staff believes that the following goals can be met with a new bus lane ordinance:

- Address the existing bus lanes that are not covered by ordinance or Council Action.
- Create a single ordinance that can be understood by the public and enforced by agencies that governs all bus lanes.
- Define a bus lane and which vehicles are allowed to use a bus lane.
- Allow provisions for use of the bus lane based on demonstrated special needs
- Provide consistent understanding and use by the vehicles authorized in the bus lane.
- Encourage and promote the City of Minneapolis comprehensive plan's (*The Minneapolis Plan*) goal of "Transit First".